

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-12, 14-19 and 21 are pending in this application. The pending claims are subject to a restriction requirement. Claims 1, 3-12, and 14-19 have been rejected.

In response to the restriction requirement, applicant provisionally elects Group 1, claims 1 and 3-8, drawn to a method combination. Claims 9-12, 14-18 and 21 are withdrawn.

While the method of Group I and III and the apparatus of Group II may be distinct as set forth by the Examiner, Applicants believe that simultaneous examination will not present an undue burden. The Examiner is encouraged to maintain the claims of Groups I and II in the same application. See, MPEP § 803.

Claims 1 and 4-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Ogami in view of Pabst.

The methods of claims 1 and 6 are directed to supplying dry fluid that is precooled in a heat exchanger before being fed into the wafer/hybrid holding device, while the fluid leaving the wafer/hybrid holding device is conducted to the heat exchanger, temperature-regulated in the heat exchanger by being used for the precooling of the supplied fluid, and then allowed to flow out within the space surrounding the wafer/hybrid holding device. In this way, the dry fluid used for temperature-regulating the wafer/hybrid holding device is re-used for conditioning the atmosphere within the space, achieving both tasks with only a small amount of dry fluid. Furthermore, by combining by means of the heat exchanger the separate tasks of precooling the supplied dry fluid and of temperature-regulating the re-used dry fluid before it is allowed to flow out within the space, both tasks can be performed with only a small amount of energy.

Claims 1 and 6 are neither disclosed nor rendered obvious over Ogami in view of Pabst.

Ogami discloses a surface treatment apparatus comprising a feed pipe 4 through which a vaporized surface treatment agent is introduced into treatment chamber. Within

the treatment chamber, a substrate to be treated is firmly held by vacuum suction holes 5 (column 4, lines 56-58) on a supporting die 2. The vacuum holes 5 being obstructed by the substrate when held, the vaporized surface treatment agent, after having flown out along the surface o the supporting die 2, are evacuated to a frame-like evacuation chamber 8, which surrounds the supporting die 2 through unillustrated ducts (column 3, line 61 to column 4, line 4). No hint or motivation can be found for any reuse of the evacuated treatment agent in a heat exchanger outside the space.

Pabst discloses a convention heat treating apparatus for thermal treatment of a traveling substrate with a treatment gas between a pair of application chambers. The apparatus contains a heat exchanger 20 thorough which the treatment gas leaving the application chambers can be reheated before being recirculated into the application chambers. However, the heat exchanger 20 is powered by an unspecified energy supply source (column 5, lines 54-55). There is no suggestion the heat exchanger is adapted to precool supplied treatment gas. On the contrary, the document refers to the heat exchanger purely as a "heating system" (column 6, lines 34-35).

Accordingly, neither Ogami and/or Pabst, individually or in combination discloses or suggests a heat exchange process as claimed in claims 1 and 6. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

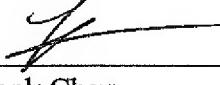
DEPENDENT CLAIMS

Claims 3-5 depend from Claim 1, Claim 7 depend from claim 6 and Claim 8 depends from Claim 3. Applicants have not independently addressed the rejections of all the dependent claims because Applicants submit that, in view of the amendments to the claims presented herein and, for at least similar reasons as why the independent claims from which the dependent claims depend are believed allowable as discussed, *supra*, the dependent claims are also allowable.

Applicants submit that the application is hereby placed in condition for allowance
which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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